

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Prepared for the Meeting of Thursday, January 24, 1963, at 10 a.m.)

FROM : Sterling J. Cottrell, Coordinator of Cuban Affairs.

SUBJECT: United States Policy re Cuba in the Organization of American States.

PROBLEM

To determine the future course of action which the U.S. should seek in the OAS with respect to Cuba.

Discussion

The Meeting of Foreign Ministers at Punta del Este in January 1962 put the problem of Cuba clearly in the hemispheric context. At that meeting the Foreign Ministers excluded Cuba from participation in the inter-American system, declared an arms embargo, and directed vigilance against Cuban subversive activities in the hemisphere.

The U.S. invoked the Rio Treaty on October 22, 1962. Pursuant thereto, the Council of the OAS (COAS) continues to act provisionally as the Organ of Consultation under that Treaty. (OC)

Acting in this capacity, the COAS/OC on October 23 unanimously passed a resolution calling for the withdrawal of all offensive weapons from Cuba, recommending that member states take such action, including the use of armed force, as might be necessary to prevent continued receipt of military supplies from the USSR and to prevent the missiles in Cuba from threatening the peace of the hemisphere. In accordance with the resolution of the COAS/OC, the U.S. instituted its quarantine. Argentina, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic cooperated with us in the quarantine and 9 others offered their assistance and facilities.

With the conclusion of the U.S.-Soviet talks in New York, the Cuban problem reverts to the OAS context. With the Organ of Consultation still in being and committees of the Council continuing to concern themselves with subversion and possible extension of economic sanctions, the other American Republics are waiting for some lead from the U.S. as to what further steps could be taken.

COURSES

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COURSES OF ACTION

(1) Continue the COAS/OC in being under the Rio Treaty but take no further action at present.

Considerations:

The Rio Treaty was invoked and the COAS/OC brought into being for the specific purpose of considering the October missile crisis. If the purpose is considered fulfilled, the COAS/OC should either be terminated or its authorization enlarged to deal with changed circumstances.

(2) Under the Rio Treaty seek a resolution in COAS/OC which condemns Cuba for its actions which continue to endanger the peace, deplores refusal to allow inspection, condemns the presence of Soviet troops and recommends continued surveillance and continued vigilance against subversive activities.

Considerations:

This would promote U.S. objectives vis-a-vis Cuba and would represent one feasible, appropriate, immediate step following the conclusion of the U.S.-Soviet New York talks.

Although the language would have to be negotiated, it is believed that unanimity or near-unanimity could be obtained.

Recent statements by Cuban leaders calling for armed insurrection in Latin America would be exploited in this connection.

It could be criticized for not constituting sufficiently vigorous action on the problem of Soviet troops, but it would put the OAS on record against their continued presence in the hemisphere and dramatize Castro's continued military subservience to the Soviet Union.

(3) Terminate the COAS/OC on the missile crisis. This would still leave COAS with its responsibilities under Resolutions II and VIII of Punta del Este (which provided for a Special Consultative Committee on Security and a Special Committee to study the further suspension of trade.)

Considerations:

This step could be considered logical, since the COAS/OC was called into being to deal only with the October missile crisis.

Taken

Taken by itself, this course of action might raise doubts concerning the inter-American legal basis under which we are continuing our surveillance.

Psychologically, if this were the only action taken, it would appear as though the OAS considered the crisis over, the presence of Soviet troops unimportant, and its principle of verification surrendered (on-site inspection and re-introduction of offensive weapons)

(4) Combine (2) and (3).

Considerations:

This combination of actions is feasible and is likely to obtain unanimity or near-unanimity.

The termination of the COAS/OC makes strong language in the resolution more acceptable to the "soft" minority.

Termination of the COAS/OC, even accompanied by the proposed resolution, is open to some of the criticism indicated under (3). Much of this could be mitigated if, however, the action is accompanied by the action suggested in (9), which imposes economic sanctions.

(5) Seek to enlarge the basis on which the Rio Treaty was invoked to encompass the presence of Soviet troops and seek a resolution in COAS/OC calling for their withdrawal.

Considerations:

With adequate consultation and preparation, we should be able to obtain a substantial majority.

Such action would give a better basis for urging such additional steps as (6) and (7) and (8).

It would seem undesirable to take this course by itself unless we seriously contemplate taking some additional strong enforcement action.

(6) In addition to (5), seek authorization under the Rio Treaty for collective action, including the use of armed force, to bring about the withdrawal of soviet troops in Cuba if the OAS call is not heeded.

Considerations:

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This action should be seriously considered only if we are determined to use all possible means to obtain removal of Soviet troops.

While it should be possible with adequate consultation and preparation to obtain a substantial majority for further political and economic sanctions to help bring about the withdrawal of Soviet troops, it would be difficult to obtain the necessary 2/3 majority for authorization of the use of armed force.

(7) Seek a resolution in the CCAS/Octo sever all diplomatic and consular relations with Cuba (probably possible only in conjunction with (5) or (11).

Considerations:

This would be consistent with general U.S. policy to increase the isolation of Cuba, but contrary to some present policies encouraging the maintenance of certain diplomatic missions in Cuba.

Although we could probably obtain the necessary 2/3 vote for such action (particularly if couched as a recommendation) it would be stoutly resisted by Mexico and Brazil and opposed by Chile, Bolivia and Uruguay, whose contrary arguments would have some appeal.

Probably no more than maximum of 15 votes could be obtained for this.

(8) Seek a resolution in the CCAS/CC to sever all economic and commercial relations and all communications with Cuba (probably possible only in conjunction with (5) or (11).

Considerations:

The severance of all economic and commercial relations would go beyond our current embargo on trade with Cuba which provides for the exception on humanitarian grounds of the export from the U.S. to Cuba of certain foods, medicines, and medical supplies. Such action would expose us to charges of inhumanity and would probably nullify our public statements that we have no quarrel with the Cuban people.

A number of telecommunications between Latin America and Europe are routed through Cuba. Prohibition of these services would interrupt communications vital to many of our Latin American friends. Further, U.S. communications with Cuba should be maintained to facilitate the transmission of messages in the national interest and those for humanitarian reasons.

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These considerations would make it extremely difficult to obtain a 2/3 majority in the COAS/OC.

(9) Seek resolution in COAS under Resolution VIII of Punta del Este which would recommend:

- (a) extension of arms embargo to all items of trade except food and medicine (Fall back position: extension of arms embargo to all strategic items);
- (b) prohibition of AR ships from transporting embargoed items and deny use of ports to ships in Bloc-Cuba trade;
- (c) denial of over-flights and transit rights to Soviet aircraft on bloc-Cuba runs. (Points (b) and (c) could also be added to No. (8).)

Considerations:

This is feasible and consistent with our objectives, and could be taken independently of other steps.

With adequate consultation and preparation, near-unanimity should be possible. Brazil would probably not go along. The actual effect of extending the embargo so far as Latin America is concerned is more psychological than practical because Latin American countries ship little except food to Cuba. But it would show forward movement and would provide a useful argument with our allies if it included an appeal to other Free World nations to take similar steps.

It would offer a helpful (though not necessary) basis for U.S. unilateral steps in controlling shipping, implementing 107 of the Foreign Assistance Act, and for urging other states to control Soviet flights to Cuba.

(10) Intensify through COAS and SCCS programs of recommended controls over subversive activities. Seek COAS resolution warning Castro that continued subversive activity may result in action under Rio Treaty.

Considerations:

The course described in the first sentence of (10) is being presently pursued under the decision taken at Punta del Este and should be continued. However, it would be difficult to get unanimous or near unanimous support for the warning resolution because of the reference to the Rio Treaty.

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1) Invoke Rio Treaty on basis of Castro's continued subversive activities.

Considerations:

If we desire to institute more vigorous collective sanctions vs. the Castro regime for its subversive activities, it would be necessary to invoke the Rio Treaty since the present functions given the COAS and Special Consultative Committee on Security (SCCS) under Resolution II of Punta del Este provide authority only for surveillance and recommendations to governments for control measures.

The primary threat of Castro is his subversive activities in the hemisphere. Should the level of Castro-directed subversive activities in the Hemisphere increase appreciably, this would become a more feasible and desirable course. This becomes an increasing possibility in view of Castro's recent speech inciting insurrection in Latin America.

The basis of any such action should consist of the production of hard evidence of the direct involvement of the Cuban regime in subversive activities in the hemisphere. There is, however, insufficient hard evidence available at this time to obtain COAS action. (A U.S. project to collate all available evidence is under way.)

(12) Assign the functions and operations of the Advisory Defense Committee (ADC) to the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB).
This could be done:

- (a) by amending the OAS Charter to assign ADC functions to the IADB;
- (b) by the COAS seeking the advice of the IADB; or
- (c) having the OAS member governments designate their representatives on the IADB to serve also on the ADC.

Considerations:

As to (a), the proposed amendment would have to be referred to the Quito Conference (whose date has not been set). Moreover, amendment of the Charter is a difficult and tortuous process and requires ratification by 2/3 of the member governments.

As to (b), this is a feasible course of action which the COAS/CC could take without specific authority. It might be difficult, however, depending on the circumstances, to persuade the Council of the desirability of such action.

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As to (c), member governments could take this course on an individual basis, but it would be necessary to convince them that "exceptional circumstances" prevailed which would justify this action under the OAS Charter.

COORDINATOR'S RECOMMENDATION

In selecting the optimum combination of actions to take with respect to the OAS, the political feasibility and international complications were key factors which I have carefully considered.

Courses of action (2) (3) (4) (9) (10) and (12) would advance us toward our objective, would be politically feasible, and would involve minimum adverse international effects. We could probably obtain a near-unanimous vote in the OAS for these courses except (10) and (12).

Courses (2) (5) (6) (9) (10) and (12) would advance us considerably further toward our objective, but (6) and (11) particularly could create a split in hemispheric unity, and would involve adverse international effects, including a probable acute confrontation with the USSR.

I believe courses (1) (7) and (8) will not serve our best interests at this time.

I recommend that we take immediately courses (4) and (9).

Course (4) calls for (a) a COAS/OC resolution under the Rio Treaty which condemns Cuba for its actions which continue to endanger the peace, deplores refusal to allow inspection, condemns the presence of Soviet troops and recommends continued surveillance and continued vigilance against subversive activities, and (b) terminate the COAS/OC on the missile crisis. This would still leave COAS with its responsibilities under Resolutions II and VIII of Punta del Este which provided for a Special Consultative Committee on Security and for the COAS to study the further suspension of trade.

Course (9) calls for a resolution in COAS under Resolution VIII of Punta del Este which would recommend:

(a) extension of arms embargo to all items of trade except food and medicine (Fallback position: extension of arms embargo to all strategic items);

(b)

- (b) prohibition of AR ships from transporting embargoed items and deny use of ports to ships in Bloc-Cuba trade;
- (c) denial of overflights and transit rights to Soviet aircraft on Bloc-Cuba runs.
- (d) a call upon other Free World nations to take similar actions.

Rationale

The steps I recommend would start movement forward towards our objective, carrying the OAS with us, without committing us to any further action.

After these initial measures are in effect, we should assess the situation and determine the feasibility of moving forward with any of the remaining courses of action, or any new courses which may be opened to us by events.

I believe we should develop our pressures steadily and gradually, bringing the OAS along with us, and keeping the situation under constant review for the optimum opportunity to initiate additional measures.

I do not believe we should take a track now which will break hemispheric unity. We may need unity later in an emergency.

Neither do I believe we should push the OAS into probable acute confrontation with the USSR at this time.

Both of these prices the U. S. may find it necessary to pay for action at a later date but not now, in my opinion.